

the Committee appointed for the purpose of Exploring the Coasts of the *Hebrides* by means of the Dredge," in almost every instance gives the habitat of the new genera and species described as "*Shetland Isles!*" a *lapsus* certainly calculated seriously to mislead those who do not refer to the original paper. We notice also, in this report on the Crustacea, constant references in cases where, on turning to the original (*e. g.* to the papers of Goës, Heller, Sars, &c.), we find no information beyond that given by the Recorder, viz. the name and locality. Such references to the commonest of species, as "*Cancer pagurus* (L.), Sars, *l. c.* p. 10," or "*Pagurus bernhardus* (L.), Sars, *l. c.*; Sp. B., Brit. Assoc. Rep. 1865, p. 52, and Ann. Nat. Hist. vol. xvii. p. 25," are worse than useless, when, on turning to the original papers, we find nothing but the name. In dealing with catalogues it is surely the better plan to give a short abstract of results in a note following the title of the paper, mentioning the total number of species recorded, and adding the names of such as seem peculiarly interesting from the fact of our knowledge of their geographical range being thus materially extended, or other circumstances. In one case, "*Corophium bonelli* (Edw.), Heller, *l. c.* p. 51," we cannot find even the name; the species is not mentioned by Heller either on that page or in any other part of his work.

## PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

### DUBLIN NATURAL-HISTORY SOCIETY.

The monthly meeting of this Society was held at the Royal Irish Academy, on Thursday the 5th of February, the Rev. Prof. O'Mahony, A.M., in the Chair.

Mr. Bradshaw read a paper "On the Habits of some Irish Birds."

Dr. Macalister read a paper "On the Myology of the Otter (*Lutra vulgaris*)."

Mr. W. Andrews, M.R.I.A., Chairman of the Natural-History Committee of the Royal Dublin Society, stated that he was anxious to have placed on record several species of rare Irish Sponges that had been noticed at the early meetings of the Society, but which had not been mentioned as Irish in Dr. Bowerbank's recent work on British Spongiadæ. Very fine specimens of *Grantia nivea* of Johnston (*Leuconia nivea*, Bowerbank) were exhibited by Dr. Scouler, in May 1844, obtained from Roundstone Bay, Connemara. The singularity of the species from that coast does not appear to have been noticed by Bowerbank, who gives no record of any Irish locality; by Thompson the name is merely given, "west coast of Ireland, M'Calla." Dr. Scouler, at a meeting early in 1846, gave the characteristics of *Halichondria hispida*. This rare species had not been obtained since it was recorded by Montagu, in the Wernerian Transactions, as met with on the south coast of England,—this discovery being its first record as Irish, it not having been until then found since the time of

Montagu; it is mentioned in Bowerbank as *Dictyocylindrus hispidus*, but no Irish locality given. At the same meeting Dr. Scouler brought to notice fine specimens of *Halichondria Johnstonia*. Dr. Scouler considered at the time that it presented features so different from what had hitherto been recorded, from its remarkable papillous appearance, and in the peculiarity of the pores, as to form it into a new genus—*Amphitrema*. It has not been recorded from the coasts of Ireland by either Johnston or Thompson. It has been collected in several parts of Galway Bay; but Mr. Andrews was not aware of any other locality on the Irish coast. Dr. Bowerbank has formed it into a new genus, *Pachymatisma* (*Pachymatisma Johnstonia*). A drawing was made by the late Dr. Harvey, and several characteristics of the spicula noticed, which present great variety of forms, similar to several occurring in other genera. The ovaria are numerous imbedded in the structure.

One of the most remarkable that had been collected in Galway and Dingle Bays was *Halichondria celata*, Johnston (*Cliona celata*, Grant, and subsequently named *Raphirus Griffithsii* by Bowerbank). No sponge has caused more confusion than this, whether we consider its range in deep and shallow water, its varied distribution of attachment, or the very dissimilar outline of form and structure it not unfrequently assumes—so much so, that *H. celata* of Johnston had been divided into twelve species. It still presents such anomalies that it is not improbable that new features may be described when the question of its decided animality is more thoroughly investigated. It is one of those difficulties that have to be encountered in the examination of the anatomy and physiology of the sponges; for unless collected and dissected with care in the living state, no true characteristics can be depended upon. Dried specimens give by no means even a correct outline of their form or mode of growth; and the more remarkable features are altogether lost—the peculiar action of the oscula and pores, the mode of reproduction,—independent of the beauty of their tints, which are altogether altered in the dried state or in spirit preparations. Mr. Andrews frequently noticed the great alteration of character that almost suddenly takes place in marine objects, especially delicate species, when placed in spirits. Mr. Andrews regretted to find, on inquiry, that the collection of sponges that had been made for the Natural-History Society had been put astray or lost at the time of the confused removal of the museum from the rooms which the Society held in Brunswick Street, and also that not more than one-third of the specimens are at present forthcoming in the Royal Dublin Society's collection, formed by Dr. Scouler—which may be attributed to the same cause, the packing and stowing away when the change from the rooms and the alterations in the museum were made. There were several unique specimens that had been collected by M'Calla.